

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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R 191237Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7961
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY SANAA
AMMBASSY VALLETTA 332

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5913

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR TS LY
SUBJ: TUNISIAN/LIBYAN RELATIONS

REF: A. TRIPOLI 1082, B. TUNIS 5788 (NOTAL)

1. WE READ WITH CONSIDERABLE INTEREST TRIPOLI'S
ANALYSIS OF ATTEMPTS BY QADHAFI TO MEND HIS FENCES
WITH HIS OTHER NEIGHBORS, NOW INCLUDING SUDAN, IN
PREPARATION FOR POSSIBLE NEW CONFRONTATION WITH EGYPT.
ON TUNISIAN FRONT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE ACTIVITY,
AS WE HAVE REPORTED OVER LAST TWO WEEKS. LIBYANS
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ARE PASSING OUT ONE INDUCEMENT AFTER ANOTHER: PROMISES
OF NO FURTHER TROUBLES OVER CONTINENTAL SHELF, OFFERS
TO REVIVE DORMANT LOAN PLEDGES AND COOPERATION AGREEMENTS.
PERSONAL APPEALS TO BOURGUIBA'S VANITY, AND OF MOST
PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE, OPENING UP OF LIBYA TO INCREASED
TUNISIAN WORKER EMIGRATION.

2. WE BELIEVE TUNISIAN WORKER EMIGRATION MAY BE MATTER OF FAIRLY MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE, GIVEN REPORT IN TRIPOLI REFTTEL OF EXTENT OF REPATRIATION EGYPTIANS FROM LIBYA. NEWS OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN LIBYA IS SPREADING FAST, AND THERE ARE NOW LONG LINES OF YOUNG MEN AT LIBYAN EMBASSY EVERY DAY APPLYING FOR WORK PERMITS. REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED IN LAST FEW DAYS OF NUMBER OF TUNISIAN WORKERS ALREADY IN LIBYA ARE STARTLINGLY HIGH, AND WE ARE MAKING AS THOROUGH A CHECK AS POSSIBLE TO TRY TO OBTAIN ACCURATE FIGURES. WE HOPE TO HAVE FULL ASSESSMENT SOMETIME NEXT WEEK.

3. TUNISIAN POLICY SHIFT ON RELATIONS WITH LIBYA SHOULD BE SEEN IN LIGHT OF PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S DECISION TO ATTEMPT RECONCILIATION WITH QADHAFI AFTER DEVELOPMENT OF EXPLOSIVE SITUATION OVER CONTINENTAL SHEBOF IN LATE MAY AND EARLY JUNE AND IS COMPLIMENTARY TO SO FAR SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE TUNISIAN/ALGERIAN RELATIONS.

6. ON OTHER HAND, HOT AND COLD CYCLES IN TUNISIAN/LIBYAN RELATIONS ARE NOW A WELL ESTABLISHED PHENOMENON, AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF INDICATIONS THAT BEHIND TUNISIAN PUBLIC POSTURE THERE IS REALISTIC APPRAISAL OF QADHAFI'S ULTIMATE INTENTIONS IF HE GETS A FREE HAND AGAIN.

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5. PERHAPS TYPICAL OF PRAGMATIC ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION BY SENIOR GOVT OFFICIALS ARE COMMENTS MADE BY ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TURKI DURING MEETING AUGUST 17. IN DESCRIBING RECENT VISIT OF REPRESENTATIVES OF LIBYAN PEOPLES ASSEMBLY TO TUNISIA, TURKI SAID PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO PERSUADE TUNISIA THAT SADAT IS A "RENEGADE" WHO IS BETRAYING ARAB CAUSE. TURKI SAID HE MADE IT CLEAR TO LIBYANS THAT TUNISIA COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT SUPPORT SUCH A POSITION. HE TOLD LIBYANS THAT IN TUNISIAN VIEW: SADAT IS NOT A RENEGADE BUT LEGITIMATE LEADER OF ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ARAB STATES; TUNISIA'S POSITION IS THAT PALESTINIAN PROBLEM MUST BE SOLVED BY PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS; AND TUNISIA FULLY SUPPORTS SADAT IN SEEKING SUCH A SOLUTION AND SUPPORTS HIS COOPERATION WITH USG IN SEARCH FOR PEACE. ON OTHER HAND, SAID TURKI, "WE WERE VERY, VERY NICE TO VISITING LIBYAN DELEGATION. AFTER ALL, WE RECOGNIZE THAT PEOPLES ASSEMBLY MUST RATIFY AGREEMENT WITH QADHAFI TO SUBMIT CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE TO INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE."
KING

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